

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00

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SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY

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S E C R E T SECTION 1 OF 2 MBFR VIENNA 0078

MBFR NEGOTIATIONS

FROM US REP MBFR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PARM, NATO

SUBJECT: MBFR NEGOTIATIONS: EMERGING SOVIET TACTIC

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. DURING THE LAST TWO WEEKS OF THE VIENNA TALKS, SOVIET TACTICS HAVE TAKEN ON A RATHER MORE SPECIFIC FORM. THEY APPEAR AIMED AT A LIMITED FIRST STEP REDUCTION AGREEMENT BASED ON THE CONCEPT OF SOME CONCESSIONS TO ALLIED INTERESTS AS REGARDS PARTICIPATION OF WESTERN EUROPEANS AND EXCLUSION OF AIR AND NUCLEAR WEAPONS, IN RETURN FOR ACCEPTANCE OF EQUAL NUMBER MANPOWER REDUCTIONS FOR EACH SIDE. THIS POSITION HAS NOT SURFACED IN AN EXPLICIT FORM AND IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE. NONETHELESS, THERE ARE ENOUGH

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INDICATIONS OF ITS EXISTENCE AND CHARACTER TO JUSTIFY

CLOSE ATTENTION TO THIS SOVIET TACTIC AND TO ITS NEGATIVE POTENTIALITIES. END SUMMARY.

THE EMERGING SOVIET TACTIC

2. DURING THE LAST TWO WEEKS, THE SOVIETS HAVE AGAIN STARTED TO REVISE THE EASTERN SYMBOLIC REDUCTION PROPOSAL TO MAKE THE PROPOSAL MORE ATTRACTIVE TO THE WEST AS AN INITIAL REDUCTION AGREEMENT. THESE AMENDMENTS HAVE INVOLVED PARTIAL RELAXATION OF THE SOVIET POSITION THAT ALL DIRECT PARTICIPANTS SHOULD REDUCE THEIR FORCES FROM THE OUTSET. (SEE IN PARTICULAR FOLLOWING MESSAGES: KHLESTOV DISCUSSION WITH US REPS ON MAY 27 (VIENNA 10); KHLESTOV DISCUSSION WITH US REP JUNE 7 (VIENNA 51); SMIRNOVSKY DISCUSSION WITH US DEPREP JUNE 5 (PARA 2, VIENNA 41); POLISH REP DISCUSSIONS WITH US DEPREP ON JUNE 7 (PARAS 2-3, VIENNA 48) AND US REP ON JUNE 14 (SEPTEL); KHLESTOV'S DISCUSSION OF JUNE 10 WITH FRG REP (PARA 2, VIENNA 73); AND PROCEEDINGS AT JUNE 11 INFORMAL (PARA 48, VIENNA 62). ALTHOUGH A SINGLE EXPLICIT PROPOSAL TO THIS EFFECT HAS YET TO BE ADVANCED, TAKEN CUMULATIVELY RECENT EASTERN STATEMENTS APPEAR TO INDICATE THAT THE SOVIETS AND THEIR ALLIES ARE NOW THINKING IN TERMS OF A SEPARATE FIRST STEP AGREEMENT IN A TWO-PHASE NEGOTIATION. THE US AND USSR WOULD TAKE THE LARGEST SHARE OF REDUCTIONS IN THIS FIRST STEP. THE UK AND CANADA WOULD TAKE SMALL SYMBOLIC REDUCTIONS. THE REMAINING WESTERN DIRECT PARTICIPANTS, INCLUDING THE FRG, WOULD AGREE AT THE OUTSET TO SMALL SYMBOLIC REDUCTIONS, BUT THEIR IMPLEMENTATION MIGHT BE DEFERRED UNTIL AFTER US-SOVIET REDUCTIONS WERE COMPLETED IN ORDER TO CREATE CONFIDENCE. KHLESTOV HAS HINTED ONCE IN A VAGUE WAY THAT HE MIGHT BE WILLING EVEN TO DROP THE LAST REQUIREMENT IF THE UK AND CANADA WOULD MAKE TOKEN REDUCTIONS ALONG WITH US AND USSR AND THAT NATIONAL CEILINGS MIGHT BE AVOIDED.

3. A SECOND AREA OF RELAXATION CONCERN CONCERN EASTERN INSISTENCE ON INCLUSION OF AIR AND NUCLEAR WEAPONS. HERE THE EVIDENCE IS LESS CLEAR, BUT THERE IS SOME. KHLESTOV TOLD THE US DEPREP ON JUNE 9 THAT SOVIETS

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WERE DELIBERATELY TRYING TO MAKE IT EASIER FOR THE WEST TO ACCEPT A FIRST STEP REDUCTION PROPOSAL. KHLESTOV THEN WENT ON TO SAY THAT, IN THIS CONTEXT, SOVIETS WERE PREPARED TO DROP DEMANDS FOR NUCLEAR AND AIR REDUCTIONS IN A FIRST STEP AGREEMENT IN RESPONSE TO WESTERN ARGUMENTS AGAINST INCLUSION OF THESE WEAPONS IN REDUCTIONS. KHLESTOV MADE A SIMILAR BUT LESS EXPLICIT REMARK TO FRG REP ON JUNE 10 (PARA 7,

VIENNA 73).

4. IN DISTINCTION TO THESE MOVES, THERE HAS BEEN NO GIVE IN SOVIET INSISTENCE THAT REDUCTIONS BE EQUAL, EITHER IN NUMBERS OR IN TERMS OF EQUAL PERCENTAGE OF THE ENTIRE FORCE STRENGTH ON BOTH SIDES. BOTH METHODS, OF COURSE, USE THE PRESENT RELATIONSHIP OF FORCES IN EAST AND WEST AS THE BASE FOR REDUCTIONS. THIS FACT, COMBINED WITH EVIDENCE OF SOVIET FLEXIBILITY AS REGARDS BOTH PARTICIPATION BY THE WEST EUROPEANS AND INCLUSION OF NUCLEAR AND AIR FORCES, WHICH HAVE BEEN MAIN SOVIET OBJECTIVES THUS FAR, WOULD INDICATE THAT THE TOP SOVIET PRIORITY IN THE MBFR NEGOTIATIONS AT THIS TIME IS EMERGING AS THE EFFORT TO ASSURE THAT ANY REDUCTION AGREEMENT IS BASED ON AND MAINTAINS THE PRESENT RELATIONSHIP OF FORCES.

5. IF OUR PERCEPTION OF THESE INDICATIONS IS CORRECT, WE WOULD EXPECT THE SOVIETS IN THE FAIRLY NEAR FUTURE TO SURFACE A PROPOSAL BASED ON THE ELEMENTS DESCRIBED IN PARAS 2 AND 3 ABOVE, NAMELY: (A) A TWO-PHASE NEGOTIATION; (B) A FIRST PHASE CONFINED TO GROUND FORCES IN WHICH THE US AND SOVIETS TAKE THE MAJORITY, BUT NOT ALL, OF REDUCTIONS, (C) SMALL UK AND CANADIAN REDUCTIONS THROWN IN FOR THE SAKE OF "EQUALITY OF TREATMENT" OF ALL OUTSIDE FORCES; (D) SMALL REDUCTIONS BY THE CONTINENTAL WESTERN EUROPEANS WHOSE IMPLEMENTATION COULD BE POSTPONED UNTIL AFTER IMPLEMENTATION OF US-SOVIET REDUCTIONS; (E) NO ARMAMENTS REDUCED IN THE FIRST STEP, NEITHER THE SOVIET TANKS THE ALLIES HAVE ASKED FOR, NOR THE NUCLEAR AND AIR FORCES THE EAST HAS PROPOSED; (F) THERE MIGHT BE A COMMITMENT TO CONSIDER REDUCING SUCH ARMAMENTS IN THE SECOND PHASE

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OF NEGOTIATIONS; AND (G) A PROVISION THAT REDUCTIONS DO NOT ENTAIL NATIONAL CEILINGS.

6. SUCH AN EASTERN POSITION WOULD HAVE CONSIDERABLE PLAUSIBILITY FOR THE WEST, PARTICULARLY

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S E C R E T SECTION 2 OF 2 MBFR VIENNA 0078

MBFR NEGOTIATIONS

FROM US REP MBFR

IF IT WERE MADE PUBLIC, AS IT PROBABLY WOULD BE.

THE SOVIETS COULD CLAIM THAT THEY HAD MET WESTERN DESIRES FOR A TWO-P

HASE NEGOTIATION BEGINNING WITH

SUBSTANTIAL US-SOVIET REDUCTION THAT THEY HAD TAKEN

INTO ACCOUNT THE DESIRE OF THE WESTERN EUROPEANS NOT

TO REDUCE UNTIL AFTER THE US AND USSR HAD GIVEN THEM

AN EXAMPLE, AND THAT THEY HAD ALSO TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT

WESTERN DESIRES TO FOCUS REDUCTIONS ON GROUND FORCES

AND TO EXCLUDE NUCLEAR WEAPONS AND AIR FORCES FROM

REDUCTIONS.

7. THE MOST NEGATIVE ASPECT OF A PROPOSAL OF THIS
KIND, IF IT WERE TO BE TAKEN UP BY THE WEST, IS THAT
IT WOULD CODIFY IN AN AGREEMENT THE PRESENT RELATIONSHIP OF FORCES,

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INCLUDING GROUND FORCES. BY ELIMINATING EQUIPMENT FROM
DEDUCTIONS, IT EVADES THE ALLIED PROPOSAL FOR REDUCTION OF
SOVIET TANKS. AT THE SAME TIME, THE FACT THAT EQUIPMENT WOULD NOT BE
REDUCED MEANS THAT MANPOWER REDUCTIONS WOULD HAVE TO BE NEGOTIATED

ON THEIR OWN, IN ISOLATION. IT WOULD NOT THEN BE FEASIBLE FOR THE ALLIES TO BRING IN NUCLEAR WEAPONS IN TRADE FOR ASYMMETRICAL SOVIET REDUCTIONS OF MEN AS WELL AS TANKS. THIS, IN TURN, WOULD MAKE IT VERY DIFFICULT FOR THE ALLIES TO PROVIDE ANY LOGICAL BASIS FOR ASKING THE EAST TO ACCEPT LARGER MANPOWER REDUCTIONS THAN THE WEST OTHER THAN THE DISPARITY ARGUMENTS WHICH ALONE WILL NOT BE EFFECTIVE. ACCEPTANCE OF THE PROPOSAL WOULD MEAN ESTABLISHING THIS REDUCTION PRINCIPLE FOR FUTURE REDUCTIONS, WHICH COULD THEN OCCUR REPEATEDLY AS FAR AS EAST IS CONCERNED SINCE EAST WOULD BE ADVANTAGED BY ITS NUMERICAL SUPERIORITY. ACCEPTANCE WOULD COST US THE COMMON CEILING AND, ALONG WITH IT, POSSIBLY THE SUPPORT OF EUROPEAN GOVERNMENTS FOR MBFR.

SIGNIFICANCE FOR ALLIED POLICY

8. THE ALLIES IN VIENNA WILL OF COURSE TAKE A STRONG POSITION AGAINST THIS APPROACH AND WILL TRY TO MOVE THE SOVIETS STILL CLOSER TO THE ALLIED POSITION ON PHASING WHILE SEEKING TO POSTPONE ALL DISCUSSION OF REDUCTIONS AS SUCH UNTIL AFTER AN UNDERSTANDING OR PHASING HAS BEEN REACHED. THE ALLIES MAY MAKE SOME PROGRESS ON PHASING AND SHOULD PERSEVERE WITH IT AS LONG AS THERE IS A CHANCE OF MOVEMENT BY THE EAST.

9. BUT THERE IS ALSO A POSSIBILITY THAT THERE WILL BE NO FURTHER EASTERN MOVEMENT ON PHASING AS SUCH BEYOND THAT SPECIFIED ABOVE AND THAT IF THE SOVIETS CHOSE TO ADVANCE THE ABOVE PROGRAM IN SPECIFIC FORM, THEY WOULD BE ABLE TO DOMINATE THE FIELD WITH A PLAUSIBLE FIRST STEP PROGRAM FROM WHICH THEY WILL NOT HAVE TO MOVE AND WHICH CAN INFLUENCE WESTERN POLITICAL AND PUBLIC OPINION. IN SUCH A CASE, ALLIED INSISTENCE ON WESTERN PHASING POSITION WOULD BE AN INADEQUATE ANSWER.

10. AS FAR AS WE CAN SEE, THE BEST WAY TO DEAL WITH THE
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EMERGING SOVIET TACTIC IS TO TRY TO GET THE SOVIETS INTERESTED EITHER IN ACTIVE DISCUSSION OF A US-SOVIET REDUCTION PROGRAM INVOLVING EXCHANGE OF TANKS FOR NUCLEARS, OR TO DRAW THEM INTO DISCUSSION OF THE SUBSTANCE OF THE COMMON CEILING THROUGH DISCUSSION OF THE DEFINITION OF GROUND FORCES. THE LATTER IS ADMITTEDLY A LESS EFFECTIVE TACTIC. HOWEVER, THE US IS NOT YET READY TO TAKE ACTION ON THE FIRST COURSE. THE EMERGING SOVIET TACTIC DESCRIBED HERE THEREFORE CREATES ADDITIONAL URGENCY FOR PURSUING, AS A SHORT-TERM EXPEDIENT, THE EFFORT TO DRAW THE EAST INTO A DISCUSSION OF THE COMMON CEILING UNDER THE

GUISE OF FORCE DEFINITIONS, AS OUTLINED IN MBFR VIENNA
0054 AND 0055.RESOR

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